

REMARKS

This amendment is presented in response to the official action dated July 24, 2007, and follows an Advisory Action dated September 27, 2007, which refused entry to the amendments to claims 32 and 34 which were presented in a paper filed September 24, 2007.

The same amendments to claims 32 and 34 are again presented, and new claims 36-56 are presented. Twenty five total claims are presented (including 4 independent claims) and no claims fee is due, the applicants having previously paid for 32 claims (including 4 independent claims).

Claims 32 and 34 now specify that the ceramic has a crystalline matrix. Claim 34 now further specifies that the ceramic is formed by compacting the metal oxide powders to agglomerate the metal oxide powders.

The amendments to the claims are supported by the original disclosure, for example in Example 3. Claim elements can be supported in the specification through inherent disclosure. See MPEP 2163, particularly section II.A.3.(b). It is respectfully submitted that a person of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that the ceramic of Example 3 has a crystalline matrix and that the metal oxide powders are agglomerated.

New claims 36-56 are directed to particular preferred embodiments such as process steps and particular metal oxides and optional dopants described in the original specification and claims. No new matter is presented.

Entry of the amendments and reconsideration of the rejections are respectfully requested. The claims are not anticipated because Kelly '640 does not disclose a ceramic having a crystalline matrix; Kelly '640 does not disclose a method wherein the metal oxide powders are compacted and agglomerated (instead the crystalline reinforcement particles, e.g., alumina or zirconia, are dispersed throughout the composite); and Kelly '640 does not disclose use of the particular metal oxides and optional dopants claimed.

Request for Personal Interview

The applicants hereby request an interview prior to a first Office action on the merits. An "Applicant Initiated Interview Request Form" is submitted herewith. See MPEP 706.07(b): "A request for an interview prior to first action on a continuing or substitute application should ordinarily be granted."

The applicants are optimistic that through an interview and discussion of the claims in view of the prior art, agreement on appropriate claim language can be reached.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and clarifying remarks, allowance of all pending claims are respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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